

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Rodent Control Campaigns.

Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, and the
Extension Service, State College of Washington, Cooperating.

USE OF CALCIUM CYANIDE IN DESTROYING
COLUMBIAN GROUND SQUIRRELS.

Experiments with calcium cyanide have shown this chemical to be most effective in the extermination of Columbian ground squirrels. While costing slightly more than poisoned grain, its efficiency is high under suitable conditions. Calcium cyanide is manufactured commercially in the dust and flake forms. When inserted into the burrows and coming in contact with moisture, it releases the deadly hydrocyanic-acid gas, and ground squirrels are killed by it when passing through and breathing it during their normal activities.

To use the flakes, put the material into a small bucket fitted with a tight lid. This should be done in the open air, and the bucket should be kept closed except when in actual use. With a long-handled mixing spoon that will hold one ounce of the cyanide, throw one heaping spoonful deep into the open burrow. Cover the field thoroughly, as each burrow left untreated reduced the desired results. It is more practical to leave the burrow open, as this saves the time of one man and the effectiveness is only slightly, if any, increased where the burrow is closed.

To apply the dust, use a portable dusting machine provided with a six-foot hose and carried on the back. Insert the end of the hose well into the burrow, tamping loose dirt around it to prevent dust from escaping. Four stokes from the duster should force the equivalent of one ounce of material into each burrow.

For the average farm the use of flake cyanide is recommended, as the results are about equally satisfactory (except in dry soils), and the cost of the dusting machine is an added expense. The use of calcium cyanide is strongly recommended to supplement the poisoned grain, particularly in wild pasture-lands surrounding cultivated fields. Where the work is carefully done a 95 per cent clean-up, or better, should result from the first application.

While calcium cyanide is effective on the Columbian ground squirrels, it is not yet recommended for destroying moles, or pocket gophers, sage rats, marmots or other burrowing rodents which occur in the State of Washington.

C A U T I O N

Gas arising from calcium cyanide is a deadly respiratory poison. Calcium cyanide should be kept in air-tight containers, should be plainly labeled, and kept out of the reach of children, irresponsible persons, and livestock.

In distributing calcium cyanide the operator should stand on the windward side so as to avoid the dust. He should not breathe the fumes. For additional precautions see label on original containers.

